REMARKS

The present amendment is submitted in response to the Final Office Action dated April 10, 2001, which set a three-month period for response, making this Proposed Amendment due by July 10, 2001.

Claims 18-21 are pending in this application.

The Applicant notes with appreciation the indicated allowability of claims 20 and 21.

Claims 18 and 19 stand finally rejected as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,434,695 to Wingen ("Wingen '695").

In light of the Examiner's comments in the outstanding Office Action, the Applicant has amended claim 18 in an attempt to more clearly state the relationship and connection between the elements of the present invention. The Applicant believes that this interconnection between the elements, as presented previously in claim 18, was misunderstood by the Examiner. Thus, the Applicant has reformulated claim 18 to more succinctly emphasize that which the Applicant sees as patentable distinctions between the present invention and the device of Wingen '695.

In particular, the Applicant wishes to emphasize that the present invention does not relate to an adjustment of the spring force of the pressure spring. Rather, claim 18 of the present application is directed to the neutralization of the overall operation of the pressure spring. In this connection, the Examiner indeed has referred to the "adjustment of the spring force" by the "pressing force" exerted by component 19 of Wingen on the spring 7. The Applicant respectfully disagrees with this conclusion.

A locking cap19 cannot be viewed as a "pressing device", in the sense

represented by the present invention, since one cannot add on the spring 7 to the locking cap 19. The unit comprising the spring 7 and the locking cap 19, in fact, is the precise spring unit whose force should be neutralized. In this regard, then, one cannot say that the locking cap 19 is a "pressing device" in the sense of the present invention.

Thus, the Applicant again wishes to emphasize that the spring in the Wingen patent referred to as a "pressure spring" is actually a "return spring", because this return spring 7 biases the knife in its starting position. The pressure device 17, 20 must be operated by means of a compressed air loading to bring the knife into its cutting position, then, so that the piston rod 17 displaces the knife in the cutting position against the operation of the turn spring. Therefore, the pressure device 17, 20 must not only overcome the force of the return spring 7, but in addition, the pressure device 17 must also produce the necessary cutting force. If the pressure device 17, 20 is no longer loaded, then the return spring 7 automatically leads the knife back into its starting position.

Therefore, due to the changeable operating force of the return spring 7, the setting of the cutting force is not uniform, should the force of the return spring 7 be neutralized, so that the pressure device must overcome exclusively the adjustment of the cutting force, and to this extent, is freed from overcoming the force of the return spring 7. This neutralization of the return spring 7 is taken over with the present invention by the pressure device, and for this reason, the present invention does not relate to an "adjustment", in the sense of a regulation or control of the spring force, but instead, relates to the complete neutralization of the return spring.

This relationship perhaps was not made entirely clear in claim 18 as

presented to this point in the prosecution of this application. Specifically, claim 18 as herein amended more clearly defines the invention as disclosed in the application, namely, that the advancing device works against the return spring in order to position the knife. The pressing device 24 takes over the role of the return spring 7 in the advancing device, so that the spring force of the return spring 7 is neutralized and the cutting force acting on the knife alone depends on the force applied from the advancing device.

Again, the Applicant believes that the amendments to claim 18 better and more clearly set forth the relationship between the elements, which the Applicant has intended to explain to the Examiner in previous amendments. The Applicant therefore submits that this amendment does not raise new issues, rather only more succinctly claims the interconnection between the elements, as described in the specification and as previously argued, in an effort to emphasize again the differences between the present invention and the device of Wingen.

The Applicant respectfully submits that, as amended, claim 18 and dependent claim 19 provide patentably distinct elements neither shown nor suggested by the Wingen reference, and further, requests withdrawal of the rejection under Section 103.

In light of the foregoing amendment and argument in support of patentability, the Applicant respectfully requests that this application now stands in condition for allowance. Action to this end is courteously solicited.

In addition, should the Examiner have any further comments or suggestions, the undersigned would very much welcome a telephone call in order to discuss appropriate claim language that will place the application into condition for

allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

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Versions with Markings to Show Changes Made

IN THE CLAIMS:

18. (Amended three times) A blade holder for cutting machines, said blade holder comprising:

a blade head secured to a lowering device and comprising a blade head housing having a chamber;

said blade head having a blade holding member;

a circular blade retained in said blade holding member;

an advancing device mounted in said blade head housing;

said advancing device comprising an advancing piston rod and an advancing piston actuating said advancing piston rod;

said advancing piston rod acting on said blade holding member for moving the circular blade [between] from a ready position into a cutting position [and a ready position;], thereby overcoming the force of a return spring acting on said advancing piston rod to press said advancing piston rod into the ready position of the circular blade;

said advancing piston actuated by a first pneumatic drive and mounted and guided in said chamber;

[a pressure spring acting on said advancing piston rod to press said advancing piston rod into the ready position of the circular blade;]

a pressing device for [overcoming] neutralizing the force of the [pressure] return spring acting on the advancing piston rod during a cutting operation, said pressing device exclusively loading said [pressure] return spring in a direction of the cutting position of the circular blade;

said pressing device decoupled from said advancing piston rod.